ANCIENT CHAIR BELONGING TO THE EARL OF DERBY.

(FORMERLY AT STRAWBERRY-HILL.)

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—Among the many rarities dispersed at the Strawberry Hill sale was a very fine old English arm-chair, lot 117, and described as "a most curious and finely-carved Elizabethan arm-chair, the back pierced and ornamented with grotesque heads: in the centre is the date 1603."

This chair, being occupied by the person who sold the catalogues, escaped the observation of many of the numerous assemblage of visitors. At my request it was placed in one of the rooms, and I made the sketch of which the above is a copy. It is a large arm-chair, rendered imposing by the carved open work at top, which contains the inscription

ANNO
DOMINI
1603

in a small panel on a white ground. It is of English oak, the prominent parts of the enrichments gilt; in the back, under the carved arch, is a coat of arms, on each side of which are the initials P. W.; these, with the architectural ornaments about them, are formed of an inlay of different coloured woods, a very common mode of decorating all kinds of furniture and joinery during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I.

The arms are:—Quarterly I. and IV. Quart., Argent and Gules, a fret or: in the first quarter an ermine spot.

II. Argent, a chevron between three cormorants sable. III. Argent, two chevrons gules; in a canton of the last, a mullet or; in the nombrel point, a martlet for difference.

Through the kindness of a friend, I am enabled to inform you that these are the arms of the Cheshire family of Warburton; and on inspecting "Ormerod's History of Cheshire," I am inclined to believe that the chair belonged to Sir Peter Warburton, Kt., one of the justices of the Court of King's Bench, who died in 1621, who introduced a martlet in the centre of his shield. He was a very eminent man, and an account of his legal progress is given by Ormerod. The family of the Warburtons were very numerous, and there were several of the name of Peter contemporarily with the date 1603. Their descendants still remain at the ancient seat, Arley Hall, built by Peter Warburton, who died in 1495.

The small collection of details will be sufficient to shew the style of the ornaments: the patterns are repeated in the chair. I have only to add that at the Strawberry-hill auction, the chair was sold by Mr. George Robins to the Earl of Derby, for the sum of 21*l.*—I am, Sir, yours, &c., C. J. RICHARDSON.

22, Brompton-crescent, May, 1844.

Since I sent you the account of the old